“THE STUDY OF COLONIAL AND POSTCOLONIAL ELEMENTS IN THE WORKS OF CHINUA ACHEBE”

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Introduction:

Colonization prominently ruined the cultures of natives and transformed them for the significance of colonizers and this has become the very reason for the production of 'hybrid' forms. In the twentieth century one cannot claim that colonization as an innocent' settlement' by the settlers in the respective colonies. The father of African literature Chinua Achebe explored colonization as the mere exploitation of the original inhabitant by the powerful elites, creating the discrimination in race, culture, different forms of knowledge, advancement in politics and technology.

For Achebe art is as 'applied art' and he opposed to 'pure art', through his esteemed writing one can discover his 'historical roots'; his novels are the way to his 'self-discovery'. Chinua Achebe not only show cased the unfortunate consequences of the colonization but also made the readers aware to the afflictions and the mental trauma created by the post colonization which had lead the natives to the never ending unrest. The postcolonial study unveils the untouched historiography of colonization by the means of layered memories. Chinua shows in his works how the forceful oppression, resistance and adoption to the Christian religion was bound to occur by the settlers.

The Man Booker International prize winner of the year 2007, is one of the famous authors in African literature. Achebe is well recognized for his eloquence in the novels, books for children, essays and many collections of poetry. His odyssey of creativity began with the world famous novel 'Things Fall Apart' published in 1958. This book explores the pre-colonial life and the themes of 'Igbo' culture in the South Eastern Nigeria as Achebe had the firsthand experience of being a native of Eastern Nigeria. With his best rhetoric, he shows the fateful colonial encounter of Western civilization with the African natives.

The title of the novel 'Things Fall Apart' is taken from the famous poem Second Coming written by W.B. Yeats.

Turning and Turning in the widening gyre
The falcon cannot hear the falconer.
Things fall apart; the center cannot hold,
Mere Anarchy is loosed upon the world….

Statement of the problem:

The word ‘Colonization’ itself reflects a heart threatening panorama, once the colonies of the European colonizers gone through. Around the globe subjugated inhabitants had the never ending mental trauma in their own colonized lands by the powerful elites. The hope of ‘Decolonization’ kept the natives to fight back but once the colonies got independence the problem of existence got more complicated. The real identity of this newly formed ‘hybrid’ due to the socio-cultural , political, religious submerge with that of Europeans was one of the big reason for the social and mental unrest among the original inhabitants and it is nothing but the consequence and the harsh reality of ‘Post-colonization’. The journey of ‘Pre-colonial’ to the ‘Post-colonized’ man carrying the conflict among him is the target area of the proposed to study.

Colonialism in the Novels of Achebe:

The word ‘Colonialism’ according to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) comes from the Roman

‘Colonia’ which meant ‘form’ or ‘settlement’ and referred to Romans who settled in other lands but still retained their citizenships.

There cannot be any necessary identity in colonialism in different parts of the world, but in the human history it is seen that it had captivated the original inhabitants and given birth to the most traumatic relationship between the colonizers and the colonized. The bloody aftermath of colonization is depicted in the novels of Chinua Achebe. One can prominently observe this colonial aftermath in his African Trilogy which contains the novels, Things Fall Apart, No longer at Ease and Arrow of God. The British colonizers tried to hamper their own political and economic rules over the original habitants of the Nigerian people which created the eternal unrest among them. The Imperialist also widely made use of missionary practice and natives were forcefully confronted to the ‘Colonial powers’ in Nigerian lands and gradually it became the ‘indirect rule’

Postcolonial Subjugation:

The word ‘Postcolonial’ itself suggests its meaning the socio-economic, political and religious transformations and difficulties in acceptance of their own culture and religion by the natives after the decolonization. In Leela Gandhi’s words, post colonialism ‘can

be seen as a theoretical resistance to the mystifying amnesia of the colonial aftermath'. It is the disciplinary project developed to the academic task of revisiting, remembering and crucially interrogating the colonial past.

The post-colonial moral trauma is revealed by Achebe in his novel 'No longer at ease' published in 1960. In this novel, the protagonist 'Obi Okonkwo' trialed for bribery. He was a villager from Umofia who got scholarship to study in England and then colonial civil service. Initially he refused to take bribes but gradually started to take as more as possible. Thus, with this example- he had clearly made the readers aware about the corruption occurred as a result of the decolonization and there was an air of grief, socio-political unrest which was far away to be handled by these newly freed birds from British colonies.

Post colonization had given the complete political freedom, innovative ideas, new agendas to the decolonized natives. The major problem with 'Post colonization' was that the European colonialism became the determining moment for the countries which were once colonized, and that too created the social unrest among the masses such an unrest and mental conflicts are beautifully woven by Chinua Achebe by means of expressing the different shades of the emotional trauma and the struggle for existence among the characters in his novels.

Literature Review:

The critical study of the colonial and postcolonial aspects contains the pre and post states of the socio-political, economical and religious and cultural changes in the native colonies those were captured for the significance of European Colonizers. The discussion in this chapter is the assertion based on the acclaimed literature which is directly or indirectly concerned to the study. The various literature are taken from the different books and articles and journals and reports altogether with inquiry commission.

Dr. Chiaka Njoku in his book 'The four novels of Chinua Achebe: A Critical Study', states that Achebe explores culture and traditions of the Igbo people in the early nineteenth century, and evaluates the early times of contact of Igbo people with the Europeans. Dr. Njoku asserts in his book that the condemnation to intellect by Odili in the novel 'No Longer at Ease' does not lead to the fulfillment but it contrasts the brilliance of Odili to the hard headed, ingenious, politically prudent Chief Nanga.

Fuchs Jacob in his article ‘Postcolonial Mock Epic: Abrogation and Appropriation’, explores about the essay of ‘Colonialist Criticism’ written by Achebe where he criticized British and American critics. Here Achebe quoted the following lines:

They said ‘universal’ by they meant without knowing it, ‘western’, or ‘like us’, “I should like to see”, Achebe wrote “the world Universal banned altogether from discussion of African literature, till that date when the people stop to use it as a substitution for the deficient self-centered European parochialism”

Laura Pilar Gelfman in his paper titled ‘The Confluence of Religion and Economic Class in the Anthills of Savannah’ explains through Ikem’s speech from twelfth chapter of ‘Anthills of Savannah’, the novel written by Achebe and published in the year 1987. This speech of Ikem is the showcase of the problems of Nigerian people created by the colonial powers. There was a huge difference in the rules made by the ruling powers and the rules which were forced over the natives. The masses were enslaved to their Christian religion with the tool of religion and money. A new English Nigerian culture was formed in the transition process from colonialism to independence and an irrecoverable change occurred by the mingling of two extremely different cultures.

In the book ‘After Empire – Chinua Achebe and the great African Novel’, Ruth Franklin speaks about the novel ‘Things Fall Apart’. According to Franklin, this novel is the first work which presents the African perspective by depicting the life of African villagers. Achebe explored the microscopic view of Igbo culture with the exhibition of the cruelties which were prevalent in the Igbo clan as the newborn twins are thrown in the bushes away as they are supposed to be inhabited by the evil spirits.

In the Rwanda’s Daily Journal of ‘The New Times’, the article published on January 22, 2010 about the book review of Chinua Achebe’s world renown book ‘Things Fall Apart’ predicates that the author helps the reader to find the way through complicacies of Igbo culture, its splendid sense of justice and eventually rule of murders, and most interestingly the dangerous machismo. At the end of the book the natives are regarded by the British colonial rulers as the savages. The Igbo society of Nigeria is portrayed with acclaimed, crystal clear aspects that shine brightly throughout the times.

Aims and objectives of the Study:

a. The present study is aimed to explore the insight of the obvious implications for the questions of racial and religious differences in the Nigerians after the colonization in the light of Chinua Achebe's fiction.

b. To study the postcolonial aftermath and the psychological conflicts of the natives those are explored in the works of Chinua Achebe.

c. To study the gender discrimination in the works of Chinua Achebe.

d. To study and define the different portraits painted by Achebe.

e. To study the impact of colonization on the socio-political, economical, religious aspects of the Igbo society mentioned in the novels of Chinua Achebe.

Hypothesis:

1. The naturalism in the characters portrayed by Chinua Achebe reveals the social, religious, personal, academic experiences of transformation before and after decolonization.

2. Colonization, Decolonization, Post- colonization lead to the social unrest and violence it is clearly showcased in the novels those are taken as the sources of study.

Scope and Limitations of the study:

Though the sources of study taken are only from the African literature but it cites the view of all the colonized countries around the world. As one is very much aware that the sun of European Empire never sets, the after effects of their Imperialism can be easily visualized in the proposed study.

The study is based only on the works of the Nigerian author Chinua Achebe so there is the depiction of the Nigerian clan which was his first hand experience as being the native inhabitant. So one cannot get the comprehensive assessment about the present and past of all natives around the globe which had went through the atrocities of the process of Colonization, Decolonization and Post colonization.

Sources of study:

a. **Primary Source:** The novels of Chinua Achebe included in the African trilogy that is

1. Things Fall Apart
2. No Longer at Ease
3. Arrow of the God

The other books which will be studied as the primary sources are

4. Anthills of Savannah
5. Man of the people

b. **Secondary Source:** The following e-material and analytical material used for the current study as secondary source of the study.

1. "After Empire: Chinua Achebe and the great African Novel," by Ruth Franklin, The New Yorker 26 May 2008.

2. 'The Four novels of Chinua Achebe: A critical Study': Njoku, Benedict Chiaka

3." Postcolonial mock-epic: Abrogation and appropriation". Studies in the Literary Imagination 33,2 (Fall2000): Fuchs, Jacob

4. "The Confluence of Religion and Economic Class in the Anthill of the Savannah": Laura Pilar Gelfman'00 (English 27, 1997)

5. The New Times, Rwanda's Daily Journal, Book Review: Things Fall Apart By Chinua Achebe. January22, 2010 (www.newtimes.com)

Methodology of the study: In the proposed research the methodology involves the critical and close analysis of Achebe's novels. The comments and views will be considered as a valuable guidelines for the purpose of objective analysis. To study the colonial and postcolonial trauma through the cultural and psychological conflicts in the works of Achebe different theories will be applied.

MLA style sheet standard will be followed in the course of study.

Scheme of Chapters :

The present research work will be divided into the following chapters.

Chapter 1: This is the introductory chapter about the history of colonization and post colonization will be discussed.

Chapter 2: This chapter deals with the major conflicts and the issues during colonization on the global level. The natives were treated as the outcast on the basis of discrimination in race, gender, religion and different branches of knowledge. The violence was treated as the weapon to oppress the natives and religion and economy as the tool for the original inhabitants of the lands.

Chapter 3: This chapter throws light on the study of the socio-political unrest after the post colonization. The habitual suppression by the colonial powers made the inhabitants passive and impotent and generated the unwillingness towards the acceptance of their own culture and religion. The natives found themselves alienated on their own lands due to irreversible mingling of two extreme cultures.

Chapter 4: In this chapter the narrative techniques of Chinua Achebe will be studied in detail in accordance with the major male and female characters those were the milestone in the works of Achebe. The gender discrimination in the Igbo clan was prevalent in the novels of Achebe as a result of machismo and the set religious rules.

Pre colonized nation also suffered due to the ruling of few powerful group of people and that is considered prominently in this chapter.

Chapter 5: This is the concluding and final chapter in which suggestions and findings of the current research will be discussed.

References:

1. “Chinua Achebe”, a short Biography and list of his books, at Achebe’s faculty page in the African Studies. Dept of Brown Universities.
2. Chinua Achebe: “Things Fall Apart study Guide” Prof Paul Brians provides the text for the Yeats poem “ The Second Coming”(Things Fall Apart Centre Cannot hold)
3. Hoegberg, David “ Principle and Practice: The logic of Cultural violence in Achebe’s,” Things Fall Apart”
4. Mc. Carthy, B. Eugene “Rhythem and Narrative Method in Achebe’s Things Fall Apart’: A forum on Fiction.